Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method of handling an electronic mail ("e-mail") message, comprising:

      a)   at a sender's side, providing to a service, via a network, a request comprising **meta-data** information regarding the e-mail message**,** **wherein the meta-data information includes at least an e-mail address of the sender and an e-mail address of a receiver of the e-mail message**;

      b)   at the service,

           b1) receiving the request off the network and processing at least a portion of the request to determine a result using a service private key, the service private key kept secret by the service; and

           b2) providing the result, from the service via the network, to the sender's side;

      c)   at the sender's side,

           c1) incorporating the result into the e-mail message, and

           c2) transmitting the result-incorporated e-mail message via an e-mail system;

      d)   at the receiver's side,

           d1)   receiving an e-mail message which is the result-incorporated e-mail message;

           d2)   processing the received result-incorporated e-mail message using a service public key to assess the integrity of the e-mail message.

2. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein:

      the step of processing at least a portion of the request to determine a result includes generating a digital signature based on the portion of the request and processing the digital signature with the service private key;

      the result includes the processed digital signature; and

      the step of processing the received result-incorporated e-mail message includes processing the digital signature using the service public key.

3.   (cancelled)

4.   (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

determining whether the e-mail message which is the result-incorporated e-mail message is actually a result-incorporated e-mail message;

if the e-mail message is not actually a result-incorporated e-mail message, performing a first particular action.

5.   (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

performing a particular action based on an outcome of assessing the integrity of the e-mail message.

6.   (original) The method of claim 5, wherein:

the particular action includes displaying an indication of the outcome of assessing the integrity of the e-mail message.

7.   (original) The method of claim 5, wherein:

the particular action includes organizing an e-mail inbox associated with the receiver based on the determination.

8.   (cancelled)

9.   (original) The method of claim 1, wherein:

the result includes an indication of a level of certification; and

the step of processing the received result-incorporated e-mail message to assess the integrity of the e-mail message includes processing the result to determine the level of certification.

10.   (original) The method of claim 9, further comprising:

at the receiver's side, filtering the e-mail message based on the determined level of certification.

11.   (cancelled)

12.   (original) The method of claim 1, wherein:

the request further comprises sender verification information; and the method further comprises

at the service, processing the sender verification information.

13.   (original) The method of claim 1, wherein: the request includes a digest of the message body.

14.   (original) The method of claim 13, wherein:

the request does not include the message body or information from which the message body can be derived.

15.   (original) The method of claim 13, wherein:

the digest of the message is generated, at the sender's side, using an SHA algorithm.

16.   (original) The method of claim 13, wherein:

the step of processing the received result-incorporated e-mail message to assess the integrity of the e-mail message includes:

deriving the portion of the request from which the result was determined;

processing the portion of the request and the received e-mail message to assess the integrity of the e-mail message.

17.   (previously presented) The method of claim 16, wherein:

deriving the portion of the request from which the result was determined includes processing the result using the service public key to generate a decrypted result;

processing the portion of the request and the received e-mail message to assess the integrity of the e-mail message includes

generating a digest of the message body and processing the generated digest and the decrypted result to assess the integrity of the e-mail message.

18.   (cancelled)

19.   (original) The method of claim 1, wherein:

at the sender's side, the result is incorporated into the message by including the result in a header associated with the message.

20.   (original) The method of claim 19, wherein:

the message is formatted according to an SMTP; and

the header associated with the message is an SMTP header.

21.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein:

a sender is associated with the sender's side; and the method further comprises:

at the service, associating a physical location with the sender.

22.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein:

a sender is associated with the sender's side; and the method further comprises:

at the service, determining how the sender may be later located.

23.   (original) The method of claim 22, wherein:

determining how the sender may be later located includes associating a degree of certainty with the determination.

24.   (original) The method of claim 23, wherein:

the result includes an indication of the degree of certainty.

25.   (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

at the service, before transmitting the result to the sender's side, receiving from the sender an indication of agreement to terms of use of the service.

26.   (original) The method of claim 25, wherein:

the indication of agreement to terms of use of the service received from the sender as part of an initial subscription by the sender to the service.

27.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein:

the sender's side is associated with a particular e-mail address of a plurality of e-mail addresses; and

the method further comprises:

at the service, before transmitting the result via the network to the sender's side, sending an inquiry e-mail message to the particular e-mail address; and

at the service, observing behavior of the sender associated with the inquiry e-mail message.

28.   (original) The method of claim 27, wherein:

the behavior of the sender associated with the inquiry e-mail message includes the sender sending an e-mail message to the service in reply to the inquiry e-mail message.

29.   (original) The method of claim 27, wherein:

the behavior of the sender associated with the inquiry e-mail message includes following instructions set forth in the inquiry e-mail message.

30.   (original) The method of claim 29, wherein:

the instructions include instruction to link to a particular universal resource locator.

31.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
at the service, before transmitting to the sender's side the result, receiving a request for the sender to subscribe to the service;
at the service, sending an inquiry message to a sender associated with the sender's side, by a transmission channel other than the electronic mail system; and
at the service, observing behavior associated with the inquiry message.

32.   (original) The method of claim 31, wherein:

the transmission channel includes a hardcopy delivery service.

33.   (original) The method of claim 32, wherein:

the hardcopy delivery service includes a mail service or similar courier service.

34.   (original) The method of claim 33, wherein:

the mail service or similar courier service requires signature of the sender.

35.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein:

the portion of the request includes an indication of an e-mail address associated with the sender, an indication of an e-mail address associated with the recipient, and a digest of a body of the e-mail message.

36.   (original) The method of claim 1, wherein:

at the receiver's side, processing the received result-incorporated e-mail message to assess the integrity of the e-mail message is without interacting with the service.

37.   (cancelled)

38.   (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

at the service, processing at least a portion of the request to generate a secondary result; and

providing an indication of the secondary result to the sender's side.

39.   (original) The method of claim 38, further comprising:

at the sender's side, performing a particular action based on the secondary result.

40.   (original) The method of claim 38, wherein:

the indication of the secondary result is an indication that the email message was generated as the result of a virus.

41.   (cancelled)

42.   (previously presented) The method of claim 39, wherein:

the particular action includes not determining the result.

43.   (previously presented) The method of claim 39, wherein:

the particular action includes not providing the result to the sender's side.

44.   (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

at the service, for a plurality of e-mails provided from the sender's side, determining a collective characteristic of the plurality of e-mails.

45.   (original) The method of claim 44, further comprising:

at the service, performing a particular action based on the determined collective characteristic.

46.   (original) The method of claim 45, wherein:

the particular action performed at the service based on the determined collective characteristic includes not providing the result.

47.   (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

sending a request from the receiver's side to obtain contact information about the sender from the service; and

at the service, providing the requested contact information about the sender to the receiver's side.

48.   (original) The method of claim 47, wherein:

the requested contact information about the sender provided from the service to the receiver's side is in a format appropriate to an e-mail client program used by the receiver's side.

49. (previously presented) The method of claim 47, wherein:

the requested contact information includes at least one link to sender advertising.